THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments concerned to provide relief to the people affected by natural calamities from their annual allocation under Calamity Relief Fund. In addition, the Government of India provides additional assistance from the National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR), in the event of calamities of rare severity.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has reported total suicidal deaths as 236. During 1997-98, an additional assistance of Rs. 12.00 crore was released to the state Government from the NFCR in the wake of damage to crops, mainly cotton, due to pest attack. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has sanctioned ex-gratia of Rs. 1.00 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased and has also announced several package measures of relief to the affected farming families including steps to assist the farmers who are facing debt trap due to damage to crops.

Fall in Cotton Production

133. SHRI N.R. DASARI:
SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's cotton production during the current season is likely to be lower than that of the last season;

(b) if so, what was the production of cotton in the 1995-96, 1996-97 seasons and the estimation for 1997-98 season; and

(c) what will be the estimated shortage and how it is proposed to be met?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The production of cotton in the country for the years 1995-96 and 1996-97 was 12.86 and 14.25 million bales of 170 Kgs each. The likely production of cotton for 1997-98 is 11.42 Million Bales.

(c) The expected fall in production of cotton in 1997-98 as compared to 1996-97 is 2.83 million bales, but the carry forward opening stock of cotton for cotton year 1997-98 is 3.04 million bales. The import of cotton is under Open General Licence with zero import duty.

CAG Audit into the Affairs of NDDB

134. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry had objected to an audit by CAG into the affairs of the multi-million National Dairy Development Board (NDDB); and

(b) whether the matter has since been decided and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) On the request of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying had granted approval for the audit of accounts of the National Dairy Development Board(NDDB) by the CAG under Sub-section (2) of Section 14 of the Comptroller and Auditor Generals (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971. The NDDB then brought up before the Government the question of applicability of Section 14 of the CAGs (DPC) Act, 1971 *vis-a-vis* Section 15 of the Act. The Government therefore referred the matter for the opinion of a senior legal counsel.

(b) The matter has not been finally decided.

Reports on Assistance to West Bengal from National Calamity Fund

135. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether all reports have been received from Government of West Bengal for grant of assistance from the National Calamity Fund and the Fund for Natural Calamity;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the details of the information which is awaited;

(d) the details of the funds released, so far and the dates on which they have been released; and

(e) whether any of the funds in terms of amount and dates, received by the State go beyond the parameters set by the Finance Commission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) The Government of West Bengal submitted a Memorandum seeking additional financial assistance of Rs. 89.46 crore from the National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR) for undertaking relief and rehabilitation measures in the wake of Tornado in March, 1998. This assistance has been sought under various sectors viz. agriculture, animal, fisheries, public health, forest, health, rural housing, power, Public Works Department, horticulture, rescue and relief.

(d) and (e) Under the existing scheme for financing relief expenditure the State Governments are required to undertake relief and rehabilitation measures in the wake of natural calamities out of the corpus of the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF). Additional assistance is also provided from the NFCR only in the wake of a calamity of rare severity.

In addition to release of the Central share of CRF amounting to Rs. 40.62 crore for the year 1997-98, first quarterly instalment of Central share of CRF amounting to Rs. 10.67 crore for the year 1998-99 has also been released on 1st April, 1998. The request of the State Government for assistance from the NFCR was examined and the situation caused by toranado was not considered as a calamity of rare severity on the basis of extent of damage and requirements of relief and rehabilitation.

कृषि क्षेत्र में महिलाओं की भागीदारी

136. **श्री दिलीप सिंह जूदेव:** क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार कृषि क्षेत्र में महिलाओं की समान भागीदारी और एक अलग पहचान बनाने के लिए कोई व्यापक योजना बनाने पर विचार कर रही है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उक्त योजना की मुख्य-मुख्य विशेषताएं क्या हैं और क्या महिलाओं के अधिकार पूर्णतः सुरक्षित रखने के लिए कोई विशेष प्रावधान किए जाएंगे;

(ग) क्या कृषि क्षेत्र में महिलाओं की भागीदारी और उनके मालिकाना हकों के बारे में अब तक कोई राज्य-वार व्यापक सर्वेक्षण किया गया है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो उसका क्या परिणाम निकला है?

कृषि मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री सोमपाल): (क) जी, हां,। आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के दौरान "कृषि में महिलाएं" नामक एक केन्द्रीय क्षेत्र की योजना मार्गदर्शी आधार पर शुरू की थी ताकि महिला कृषकों को कृषि क्षेत्र में बराबर की भागीदारी प्रदान की जा सके और उनकी पृथक पहचान बनाई जा सके।

नौवीं योजना अवधि के दौरान इस स्कीम का और अधिक राज्यों/जिलों में विस्तार किए जाने का प्रस्ताव है।

(ख) इस योजना में महिला कृषकों को समूह बनाने के लिए प्रेरित करने तथा संगठित करने की बात अनिवार्य रूप से निहित है। विस्तार, प्रशिक्षण, आदान और अन्य कृषि समर्थन संबंधी सभी सेवाओं को इन समूहों के माध्यम से संचालित किया जाता है। इन समूहों को विशिष्ट सोसायटियां बनाने के लिए भी प्रोत्साहित किया जाता है। महिला तथा बाल विकास वर्तमान में राष्ट्रीय महिला अधिकार नीति की जांच कर रही है जिसमें पुरुषों और महिलाओं के अधिकारों में बराबरी के लिए वचनबद्धता की मांग की गई है।

(ग) जी, नहीं।

(घ) प्रश्न ही नहीं होता।

Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme

137. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are sponsoring a Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme for all loanee farmers;